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ABSTRACT

A study examined a program for implementing a reader's workshop to improve low reading skills. Subjects were first-, second-, and third-grade students in a suburb of a large midwestern city. The problem of low reading skills was observed and documented in grade 1 through a sight word assessment and a 3-part writing assessment which included a sound assessment record, a writing sample, and observations of the students while writing. In all grade levels, low reading skills were assessed through oral reading sample and checklist, surveys, and observations of the students reading. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that low reading skills may be attributed to the actions, behaviors, and attitudes of the three groups of people most closely involved in the development of the reading process--the parents, teachers, and the children. Reviews of curricula content and instructional strategies revealed a need for a program which offered practice with reading skills presented in a motivating environment. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of the intervention, Reader's Workshop, for students in the targeted school. Results from post-intervention data indicated an improvement in students' decoding and comprehension skills. Findings revealed that students' attitudes towards reading improved considerably as well. (Contains 8 figures and 28 references; various forms including the survey instruments, labelled A through Z and AA through CC, are appended.) (CR)

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ED 398 586

IMPROVING LOW READING SKILLS THROUGH THE USE OF READER'S WORKSHOP

by

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Julie Niego
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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Action Research Project
Site: Elk Grove Village, Illinois
Submitted: April 30, 1996

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Abstract

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Date: April 30, 1996

Title: Improving Low Reading Skills

This report described a program for implementing Reader's Workshop in order to improve low reading skills. The targeted population consisted of first, second, and third grade students in a growing middle class community located in a suburb of a large Midwestern city. The problem of low reading skills was observed and documented in first grade through a sight word assessment and a three-part writing assessment which included a sound assessment record, a writing sample, and observations of the students while writing. In all grade levels low reading skills were assessed through an oral reading sample and checklist, surveys, and observations of the students while reading.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that low reading skills may be attributed to the actions, behaviors, and attitudes of the three groups of people most closely involved in the development of the reading process. The parents, teachers, and children affect the children's growth and attitudes towards reading and themselves Reviews of curricula content and instructional strategies revealed a need for a program which offered practice with reading skills presented in a motivating environment.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of the intervention, Reader's Workshop, for students in the targeted school.

Post intervention data indicated an improvement in students' decoding and comprehension skills. Students' attitudes towards reading improved considerably as well.

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Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

General Statement of Problem

The students of the targeted first, second, and third grade classes exhibit low reading skills. Evidence for the existence of the problem specific to first grade includes a review of kindergarten sight words and a three-part writing assessment including a sound assessment record, a beginning writing sample, and observations of the students while writing. Evidence for the existence of the problem in all targeted classes includes an oral reading sample and checklist, observations of the students while reading, and statistics of students in the classrooms receiving learning disability resource services in reading or Title One services, and statistics of those children, in the teacher's opinion, struggling with reading, but not yet receiving any additional services outside the classroom.

Immediate Setting

The school's total enrollment is 358. The major racial-ethnic groupings include: White non-Hispanic (93.3 percent), Black non-Hispanic (0.6 percent), Hispanic (3.1 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (3.1 percent). Due to rounding of percentages, the figures do not equal 100 percent. The percent of these students coming from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches is 2.0 percent. Three and six-tenths percent of these students have been found to be eligible for bilingual education. The school's attendance rate is 96.2 percent with a student mobility rate of 5.1 percent. One hundred percent of the parents/guardians made at least one contact with the students' teachers during the 1994-1995 school year. The average class size for first grade is 17.7 students, and the average class size for third grade is 21.3 students. The operating expenditure per student in the district is $7,032 (State School Report Card, 1995).

District-wide, there are 98 certified staff members of which 50.8 percent have a Master's Degree or more. Ninety nine percent of the staff is White and one percent of the staff is Asian/Pacific Islander. By gender, the staff is 18.8 percent male and 81.2 percent

female. Teachers have an average of 13.9 years of experience. The average teacher's salary is $42,871 (State School Report Card, 1995).

Due to limitations in size and structure of the building, a new school was built and occupied in the Fall of 1995. It is one of two elementary schools in the district. Attendance boundaries were redrawn for the students, and reassigning of the teachers occurred. The new school has 22 regular education classrooms, seven classrooms assigned for special classes, a centrally-located library and Apple computer lab, multi-purpose room with a stage, gym, community room, art room, music room, and band room. The new building provided some much needed relief from overcrowding.

All K-5 classrooms at the school are self-contained. Students are randomly assigned to the classrooms at all levels. Each individual teacher is responsible for teaching all curriculum subject areas with the exceptions of physical education, music, and art.

Reading is integrated throughout all content areas. Reading is taught 450 minutes a week as outlined by the district. Additional resources such as Title One and learning disability programs are also available to students who qualify. During the Spring of 1994, the district piloted Houghton Mifflin reading series. The 1994-1995 school year was the first year of implementation. The district

mandates the use of this reading series and the theme tests, however, teachers are free to choose the styles and techniques with which to teach the concepts within the reading series. Some teachers' styles are traditional, focusing solely on the basal. Other styles are more holistic, incorporating novel units, language experiences, and hands-on reading activities.

The district identifies one curriculum area a year to be reviewed and updated. Reading was the focus two years ago. Last year's focus was on the spelling and language program.

Description of Surrounding Community

The students reside in a northwest suburb of a Midwestern city. This community is divided into four separate elementary/junior high districts. The district is overseen by a local school board and a superintendent. Within the district, there are two elementary schools and one junior high. The junior high students will attend the same high school.

This community has 20,948 housing units with 66.9 percent owner occupied, 29.9 percent renter occupied, and 3.2 percent vacant. The median value of a single family home is $155,100. The median rent is $564 (U.S. Census, 1990). There are also various retail and corporate establishments, including Randhurst Shopping

Center, RecPlex, Lake Center Corporate Park, Kensington Center for Business, and scattered commercial sites (Living in, 1994).

There are 53,168 people residing in the community. The major racial-ethnic groupings include: White (90.3 percent), Black (1.[illegible] percent), American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut (0.1 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander (6.4 percent), and other races (2.1 percent). The Hispanic population, which is already included in the figures above, is 6.4 percent (U.S. Census, 1990). The median income is $61,084 (Living in, 1994).

The community supports the district in various ways. The passing of the referendum in March of 1994, allowing for the building of two new schools, is the greatest example of their support. Other supportive actions include the planting of 10,000 daffodils by the corporations, families, and schools in the downtown area, and the community contributions to the school's fifth grade space simulation project.

National and Regional Context of Problem

The majority of teachers are constantly searching for effective strategies to help students achieve. Reading instruction tends to be a high priority for most teachers (Fowler, 1993). The goal of reading instruction is to enable students to read

independently in order to develop meaning through text (Gaskins, 1988).

According to the figures of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, average reading proficiency for students 9- and 13-years-old has stayed the same over the past twenty years. Young adults (21-25 years old) have achieved a basic literacy rate of 97 percent. This means they are able to understand and use newspapers and pamphlets without difficulty. Although these reports seem positive, our world has changed dramatically over this time period (Sanders, 1993). The basic literacy skills are not enough for children of today's society. According to one study reported in The State of a Nation's Public Schools, only one in six nine-year-olds is able to search for specific information, relate ideas, and make generalizations when reading. These higher order skills require literacy beyond the basic level (Hodgkinson, 1993).

Students varying in all levels of reading are found in all classrooms today. Comprehension comes easily to good readers because the students possess the skills necessary to decode new words quickly and without much effort. More time is spent focusing on the meaning of the text rather than the breaking apart of the words. The extensive sight word vocabulary is another benefit to these readers (Gaskins, 1993). At the other end of the spectrum are

the poor readers. These students have difficulties with phonemic awareness and segmentation, sight word vocabulary, word analysis, oral miscues, and/or vocabulary knowledge. Comprehension and fluency are impeded because the majority of the time, the students are concentrating on decoding each word instead of deriving meaning from the text (Marlow and Reese, 1992).

A lack of skills is not the only problem for poor readers. Due to their struggles in reading, other academic areas that require reading suffer as well. The problem is further compounded as students move through the grade levels. These students may also develop a negative attitude toward reading. Frustration levels may rise. Students may exhibit little desire to try. Poor readers may display a negative attitude towards themselves as students and in other areas of their life. Immature relationships between the students and their parents, teachers, and peers may exist (Gentile and McMillan, 1987).

Teachers are constantly searching for effective strategies or methods to help students achieve. As long as students continue to pass through schoolroom doorways, reading and the concerns of poor readers will be an issue for educators.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

In order to document the existence and extent of low reading skills among the students in the targeted school, it is important to first determine how many of the students are receiving special services in reading or are, in the teacher's opinion, struggling in reading and not yet receiving services. In first grade, there are six students out of 22 who are receiving Title One services. Two other students are participating in the reading recovery program. In the teacher's opinion, there are two additional students who are struggling in the area of reading but are not yet receiving services. At second grade, two students out of 22 attend the learning disability resource room for reading services, four students participate in Title One, and three students are struggling with reading, but are not yet receiving services. In third grade, four

students out of 21 attend the learning disability resource room for reading services, one student participates in Title One, and one more student is struggling with reading but not yet receiving services.

When documenting low reading skills among the first grade students, 30 kindergarten sight words were assessed.

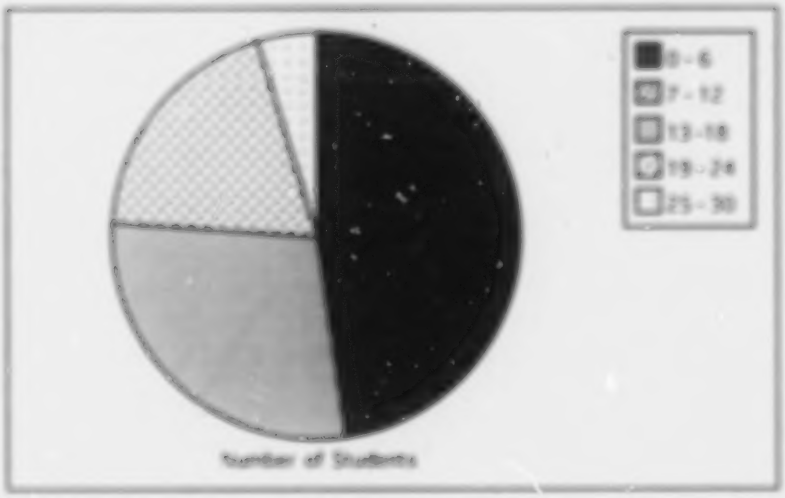

Figure 1

Number of Missed Words

(Appendix A)

Of the 22 students assessed, more than 50 percent of the students could not identify approximately half of the words they were expected to have mastered in kindergarten. Of these students, six were not even able to recognize one-third of the words. Without

the ability to recognize basic kindergarten sight words, students' reading skills are hindered. They lack the necessary foundation on which to build more advanced reading skills.

When documenting low reading skills among first grade students, a writing component was also necessary to evaluate the students' understanding of the relationship between letters and their sounds. Three separate tools were used including a one-word sound assessment (Appendix B), a beginning writing sample, and teacher observations of the students while writing.

From these tools, one can assume that of the 22 students, more than 50 percent of the class were confident in their writing and were able to write beginning, middle, and ending consonants as well as some incorrect vowels. Although this seems very positive, there were nine students less confident and less able to perform the task. Two students could write beginning and ending sounds with vowels sometimes seen, two students were mostly writing beginning sounds with random letters strewn in, and five students needed constant one-on-one interaction to write any of the sounds. Their sound assessment record indicated there was a definite lack of knowledge of the majority of the sounds.

A final tool used to document low reading skills among first grade students was an oral reading sample and checklist (Appendix C). All students read the same five sentence paragraph. Notes were taken by the teacher on the checklist to evaluate the students' reading ability and skills. Of the 22 students, there were only four who were able to read the entire paragraph without difficulty. They knew the majority of the words by sight and were easily able to decode the rest.

Of the remaining students, three students used multiple decoding strategies. Six students tried to sound out the words with little success or substituted other incorrect words according to the first letter of the word. These students did not realize that the story did not make any sense. Five students relied only on sight to read the words he/she knew. Sometimes only three to five words of the passage were read. When asked what to do when a word was unknown, all of these five students replied, "Sound it out." Most were unsuccessful in their attempts. The last four students were able to read only one or two of the words in the entire passage. They also were unable to predict what the story was about, not realizing the illustration could be used as a tool.

In second and third grade, an oral reading sample and checklist were used to document low reading skills among the students (Appendix D). The skills assessed on this checklist include strategies for decoding, fluency, expression, literal comprehension, and inferential comprehension.

At second grade, when analyzing the students' strategies for decoding, it was observed that 13 of the 22 students relied solely on sounding out the word. Two of the children were only able to make substitutions based on the first letter. Six of these students did not even know to look at the picture when decoding a word. This is one of the first skills taught to students in first grade.

In terms of reading fluency, of the 22 students, nine students' reading fluency was inhibited due to the constant necessity to stop and decode the words. Comprehension was also affected by this. These students had difficulty recalling facts, identifying story elements, and making inferences based on details of the story. None of these students were able to use expression while reading. Their focus was solely on decoding the words.

In third grade, where reading skills are more developed and less students seem to have difficulty in this area, there were still six students out of 21 who relied mostly on one decoding skill. Two

of these students used only the first letter to decode, and the other four were only able to sound out, with little success. One of these students did not even use the picture clues.

These same six students had difficulty reading the story fluently. They either read word by word, stopping constantly to sound out the words, or else they were able to read a few words before stopping to sound out. A few of them read the story at a greater speed, but did not slow down enough to read the correct words. They consistently substituted other words based on the first letter, without realizing or questioning if the story made any sense. Most of the time, comprehension was affected. Two students could not recall facts, and four could not make inferences based on the story. None of these six students read the passage with expression.

This documentation reveals that there are students in first, second, and third grade who could be classified as low readers. The evidence proves that they lack the skills necessary to become successful, fluent readers.

Probable Causes

Low reading skills affect many aspects of learning. Teachers are challenged to find ways to improve low readers' skills every day. Understanding the underlying causes can aid in this endeavor. The

researchers felt teachers would have the strongest opinions of why students lack reading skills. Therefore, a teacher interview asking for an opinion on this matter was given to all of the teachers and a few of the supporting staff in the targeted school (Appendix E).

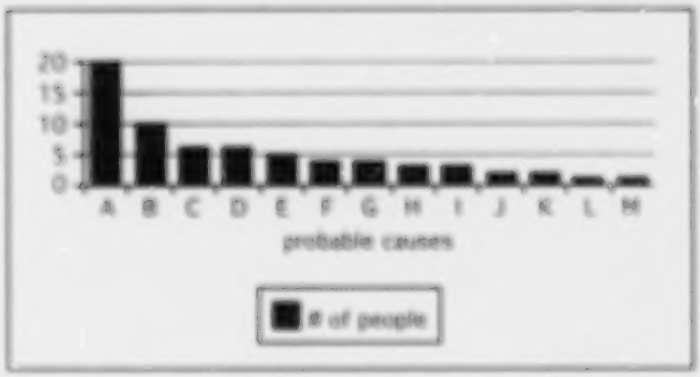

Figure 2

Probable Causes of Low Reading Skills

(Appendix F)

A -- Little or no parent involvement at home
B -- Little or no exposure to books at home
C -- Students' lack of knowledge about sounds, letters, and/or sight words
D -- Students' negative attitude about reading
E -- Too much TV and/or video games
F -- Lack of decoding skills
G -- Lack of time devoted to reading/practicing skills
H -- Lower stage of development
I -- Learning disability
J -- Students' lower self esteem
K -- Single family homes
L -- Students' own lower intelligence
M -- Inappropriate methods of teaching

The graph suggests that the attitudes and behaviors of the people most personally involved in the reading process, the children, the parents, and the teachers, have the greatest effect on the development and success of students as readers. According to the opinions of the professional staff, parents are not spending quality time talking, reading, instructing, and playing games with their children. Even before these children enter school, they are not developing appropriate pre-reading skills and attitudes due to the lack of exposure to print, books, and a good reading model.

Based on the fact that parents are the single most important influence in a child's life, the researchers felt it appropriate to survey the parents in the classes of the targeted school. The purpose of this survey was to ascertain the amount of time parents and their children were interacting with each other as well as engaging in other activities such as reading, writing, watching television, doing homework, playing games, etc. (Appendix G). The results of this survey were positive and reassuring to the researchers. According to the data, parents from the targeted school were spending time with their children engaging in various activities. However, there were some parents and students not spending an appropriate amount of time participating in activities that would promote higher reading skills.

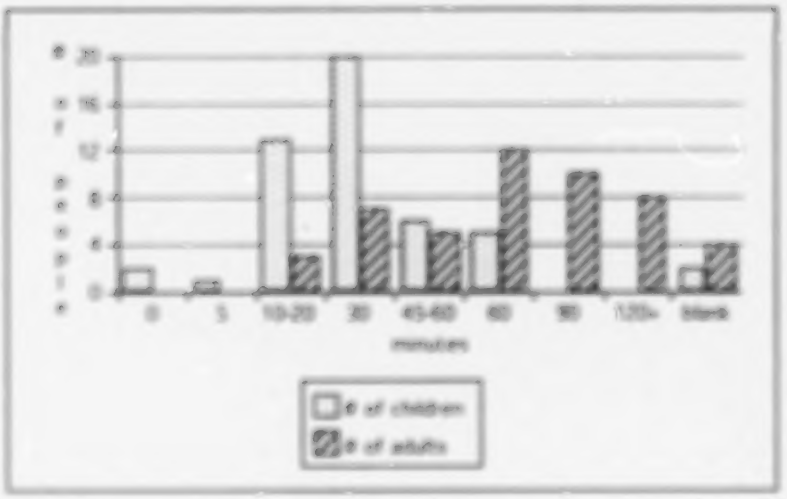

Figure 3

Time Spent Reading at Home

(Appendix H)

Of the 65 surveys sent out, 49 were returned. From these surveys it is perceived that there are a good percentage of students reading 30 minutes or more a day outside of school. As educators, the researchers believe this to be an adequate amount of time. However, concerns remain for the students at the other end of the spectrum who are only reading 20 minutes or less or not at all. How many of these students are the ones struggling with reading in the classroom?

The majority of the parents spend 60 to 180 minutes reading outside of school. Of these parents, how much of this time is after

the child goes to sleep or is otherwise not present? For children to be successful in reading, shared reading time between parents and children and an appropriate reading model must be present in a home. If parents are reading after a child is in bed or is not present, those benefits are lost.

The researchers also must question some varying factors about the data collected: How many of the parents/students who did not respond would reflect more negative data? How many of the parents gave a rounded-up estimate of the amount of time spent reading at home?

The next activity the researchers analyzed was the amount of time the parents and students spend writing at home.

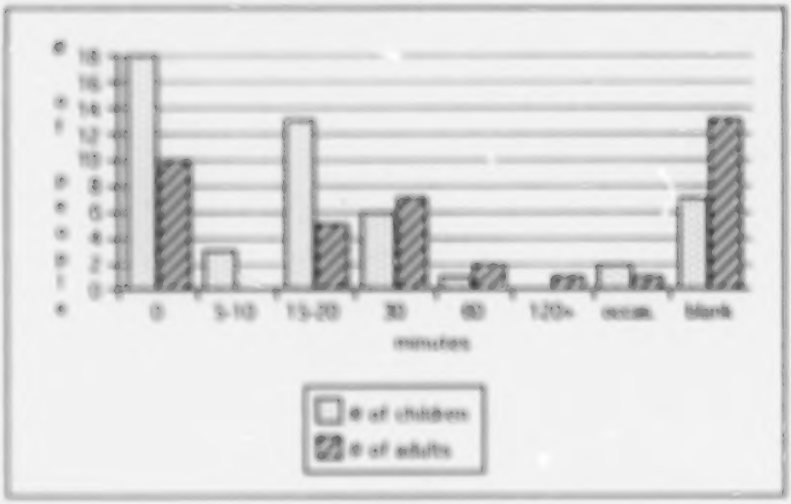

Figure 4

Time Spent Writing at Home

(Appendix I)

Based on the data, especially the high number of parents who wrote a "0" or a "-" or left this question blank, the researchers conclude that there are many families in the targeted school who do not realize the importance of writing or a writing role model. Within these households, students are not practicing important writing skills which have a strong impact on the development of the various reading skills, such as the correlation between letters and sounds and the transfer of known sight words into written form.

Lastly, the researchers examined the amount of time parents and children spend watching television at home.

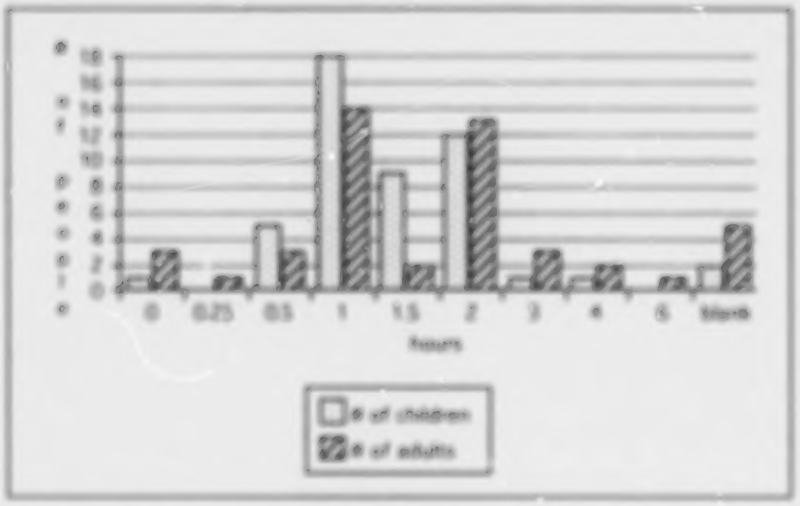

Figure 5

Time Spent Watching TV at Home

(Appendix J)

Of the 49 parents surveyed, 39 reported that their children watch anywhere from one to two hours of television a day. Four children watch three or four hours of television daily. These amounts appear to be excessive based upon the amount of time a child is at home during a day. Compared with reading and writing statistics, the researchers question which activities are viewed as more valuable and therefore are given more time.

According to the graph, parents are watching an abundance of television as well. Just as parents are models to their children in reading and writing, their television habits are learned by the

children as well. As more time is spent with television, children begin to value it, rather than participate in activities more beneficial to the development of reading.

In order to further investigate the probable causes of low reading skills among students, the researchers felt it very important to interview the students themselves. Questions which related to reading behaviors and attitudes were asked (Appendix K).

When analyzing the responses the students gave, the researchers concluded that a few patterns emerged. When the children were asked the question, "What do you do when you don't know a word?", the majority of the students stated that they sound out the words. When asked to elaborate further, only a few could provide other methods of decoding. This shows that many students of the targeted school tend to rely on only one skill when decoding. It is imperative that students have a variety of options to choose from when decoding a word in order to be successful readers.

When asked about reading practices at home, students reported that family members were spending a less desirable amount of time than expected. The majority of the students replied that the only time they were read to by another family member was right before bed. The researchers question whether or not this was a quality

reading experience. Were parents engaging the children in beneficial learning practices such as pointing to words, talking about the text, predicting story elements, etc., or were they mainly just reading the stories aloud?

A last question presented to the students that indicated a probable cause of low reading skills among students was, "Why do you think it is important to be a good reader?" Most students did not know how to answer this question or else gave an answer related to school. For example, many students replied the reasons for being a good reader included getting good grades, doing well in the next grade level, or so you can do well on your homework. This implies that many children do not understand the real reasons for reading: for enjoyment, for learning new information, and for transferring knowledge gained through books into real life.

From all of the data collected, it can be stated that it is the people most closely associated with the development of a reader who have the greatest effect on this process. The attitudes and behaviors of the teachers, parents, and students are the dominating factors causing low reading skills among students.

The literature also suggests that the probable causes of low reading skills may be attributed to the actions, behaviors, and/or

attitudes of three groups of people most involved in the development of the reading process -- the parents, the teachers, and the children. The parents and the environment they create at home play a vital role in the development of children's reading. In increasingly more households, the role of reading is becoming less visible and important. According to Robinson (1990), adults spend an average of 2.8 hours per week engaged in primary reading activities. This means children are not observing parents reading, causing them to believe that reading is neither necessary nor important.

Another factor of the home environment affecting children's reading is the scarcity of reading materials available. Appropriate books, newspapers, magazines, and other forms of print may not be found in homes where children are lacking reading skills. An absence of appropriate reading materials reinforces the false belief that reading does not play a primary role in a person's life. It also interferes with the essential practice with print which is needed to become a stronger reader (Turner, 1992).

According to Rayborn (1993), one of the most influential factors affecting a student's ability to read is the amount of time the parents spend reading with their children. Parents who do not read with their children put them at a disadvantage. A positive,

life-long relationship with books may be lost due to the lack of this experience.

In addition to the parents, another group associated with the development of children's low reading skills is the teachers. The methods of instruction implemented and classroom environment established by the teacher are two of the factors which may cause deficient reading skills in children. According to Rothman (1990), students do not spend enough time reading independently in the classroom. Some teachers are not providing students ample time to read independently and at their own level. Reading may be perceived by the children as an activity only related to work. Without an independent time where students can choose books of their own liking and levels, some students may exhibit frustration and others may not be challenged with the materials provided for them.

In other classrooms, such traditional methods of instruction such as outdated basals or reading ability groups are still being practiced. When utilizing the basal as a sole source of reading instruction, students are expected to read stories that are unpredictable, simplistic, and not well made. Skills are taught in isolation. Students are not provided with opportunities to read silently in and out of the text. This teaching style may not be

motivating for students. Students are also not being given experiences with "real" reading, those which will enable them to transfer what they have learned through reading to everyday life (O'Donnell and Wood, 1992). Reading is perceived by the students as only a "school activity", not something enjoyed in their free time (Turner, 1992).

Another questionable method of instruction being implemented in classrooms today is the use of reading ability groups. Students are grouped according to their academic performance in reading: high, middle, and low. Within these groups, students may be treated and taught differently. For example, students within the high or middle reading group work in a more positive environment. The teacher smiles more, looks in the students' eyes more, and offers softer criticism or warnings when disciplining. Seventy percent of the group's time is spent reading silently. Comprehension is the goal of most of the lessons. With the low reading group, students are treated more negatively. The teacher's body language may include more glares, frowns, and distancing of themselves from the students. Discipline tends to be more harsh and vocal. Students in this group spend the majority of their work time on isolated skills and less time on comprehension. The outcome of ability grouping may cause children to feel they have no control over their learning,

expect less of themselves, expend less effort in reading, and develop a negative attitude about reading and themselves (Wuthrick, 1990).

Along with the methods being taught in the schools, the environment plays a role in the acquisition of reading skills. Physically, some classrooms may lack a print-rich environment. Books may not be accessible or displayed in a way appealing to students. Students may not be immersed in any kinds of print, including books, poems, labels, signs, charts, etc. In this type of environment, students may not be motivated or encouraged to read (Turner, 1992).

The learning atmosphere within the classroom may be another environmental factor. Turner (1992) reports detrimental learning atmospheres include those which are overly competitive or rely heavily upon ability grouping. Low readers within these atmospheres are less likely to take risks in their reading. They may also be looked down upon or treated differently by their peers and their teachers. Their self esteem may, in turn, plummet.

The final group that plays a role in the development of low reading skills is the children themselves. Turner (1992) suggests there are three factors which may cause children to be reluctant to read. The first of these is the children's lack of interest in reading. Children who do not find reading as a desirable activity choose not

to spend much time involved in it. These children tend to avoid reading situations whenever possible. Without this needed practice, children may not improve their reading skills.

A second causal factor of reluctant reading is the children's lack of reading ability and/or past failures in reading. Whenever children succeed at anything, whether it be a sport, task, or reading a book, they feel motivated to try it again and again. When students fail at their first attempts at reading or do not read as well as their peers, they may view themselves as incapable of reading and less of a person. They may become less of a risk-taker. Therefore, they may not try as hard, expect less of themselves, and have a negative attitude about reading (Turner, 1992).

The third attributing factor to reluctant reading is the social values attached to competency in reading. Those students who read well gain social status in the classroom. They are looked up to by their peers. Students with low reading skills are viewed more as outcasts. They may be considered inferior to their peers. These beliefs manifest within the low readers. When this occurs, students may be less likely to put forth the effort to improve or even attempt the reading task (Turner, 1992).

The self esteem of children is an enormous factor influencing the development of reading skills. "How an individual feels about

herself or himself as a reader could clearly influence whether reading would be sought or avoided, the amount of effort that would occur during reading, and how persistently comprehension would be pursued" (Henk and Melnick, 1995). When children perceive themselves as poor readers, they are not motivated to read, expend less effort during reading activities, and do not view reading as a gratifying experience.

The last factor related to low reading skills in children is the amount of free time they spend reading. According to Watkins (1992), the average American child reads only one day out of five. Even more specifically, according to a study of fifth graders completed by Hayes and Lancy (1988), 50 percent of the children read a book during their free time an average of four minutes or less a day, 30 percent read a book two minutes or less a day, ten percent never read a book on any day, and with most children, one percent of their free time is spent reading books. These deplorable statistics paint a clear picture of the reasons children are having difficulties in reading today. Without the consistent practice with print, children can not be expected to improve.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Research suggests it is the role of the parents and the teachers to find meaningful ways to improve low reading skills. Sometimes, motivation may be the key. Parents are instrumental in motivating their children to read. "Home is the child's first learning environment, and activities there contribute greatly to a child's reading progress" (Danielson and Wendelin, 1988). Parents first of all need to read to their children on an ongoing, daily basis. Reading aloud to children instills a love of reading, a life-long reading habit, and the knowledge required to successfully read (Lickteig and Russell, 1993).

Another opportunity for parents to motivate their children to read is by modeling the reading process themselves. When children observe their parents spending time reading, it promotes the

attitude that reading is important and enjoyable, and has a purpose in everyday life (Rayborn, 1993).

Another responsibility of the parents is to continuously offer support and encouragement of their children's attempts at reading. Parents need to take time to process with the children their successes and failures with reading (McMakin, 1993). Parents also need to establish an uninterrupted block of time at home where everyone reads. Other activities at home in which parents motivate their children to read include the following: reading to their children of any age, listening to their children read, playing reading games with their children, and encouraging their children to become involved in reading activities outside of the home, for example, at the library (Turner, 1992).

Teachers also have a role in helping parents become more involved in their children's education. It is the teacher's job to educate the parents. They need to discover what their students' parents know about helping their children to read. For instance, what experiences are the parents offering their children at home? What are the parents' beliefs or attitudes about reading? With this knowledge, teachers can formulate activities or strategies the parents can use at home to help their children become stronger readers. They can also send home appropriate literature about

reading (Danielson and Wendelin, 1988). In addition, it is also important for teachers to keep the parents informed about the events and activities occurring and about their children's progress at school (Sattes, 1989).

Inside the classroom, the teachers can improve low reading skills by implementing methods of instruction more appropriate and beneficial to students. A literature-based curriculum is one such method. There are many facets within this curriculum which teachers may choose to implement. A classroom that promotes a literature-based curriculum must first and foremost be filled with appropriate and motivating reading materials. A variety of genre are necessary to attract readers with different interests. Books encompassing a range of reading levels are also an important attribute of a literature-based classroom. Other materials in a literature-based classroom include audio tapes and video tapes of books (Turner, 1992).

Reading aloud to students on a regular basis is a vital element of a literature-based curriculum. "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (Lickteig and Russell, 1993). When children are read to, they begin to understand the components

of written language, such as the fact that words on a page are read and that they convey meaning (Soundy, 1993).

Another aspect of a literature-based curriculum is providing opportunities for students to retell books. Students need time provided for them to use puppets, word cards, sequencing cards, or their own bodies to act out various stories. Through the active manipulation of props, students' comprehension and oral communication skills improve (Soundy, 1993).

Shared reading experiences are also useful when teaching within a literature-based curriculum. A class gathers as a whole or in small groups to read the same book or a story from a basal and discuss its elements. Some shared reading experiences include echo reading, where students echo their teacher or partner; choral reading, where the class reads the story in unison; and partner reading, where two students share the reading of a story. This time also offers children a chance to communicate their reactions and feelings about a story with relation to their real life (Turner, 1992).

A final aspect of a literature-based curriculum is the implementation of an independent reading time. Throughout the day, children should be given ample time to read independently. Students should be able to choose books or other reading materials that they would enjoy and that are at their own reading level (Sanacore, 1992).

Reader's Workshop is another method of instruction teachers can implement to strengthen low reading skills. Some of the components of a literature-based curriculum are also found in Reader's Workshop. These include retelling stories through props and independent reading. Reader's Workshop also includes mini lessons and written, dramatic, or verbal responses to the literature. Mini lessons addressing reading procedures and skills are determined by the teacher according to the needs of the students. Students will be responsible for choosing books at their own level, keeping a record of the books they have read, responding to the literature through various projects, and self evaluating their growth as readers (Jackson and Pillow, 1992). Reader's Workshop "brings the 'real' world of reading into a classroom... The children not only learn how to read, they also learn what reading is all about" (Hagerty, 1992).

A final way teachers can strengthen low reading skills is by utilizing computers to compliment their reading program. Computer software which emphasizes targeted reading skills are incorporated into the classroom activities. These games and interactive books provide children with additional practice and drill of reading skills in a motivating way. Reluctant/low readers and fluent readers are equally enthusiastic about using computers. While these students

believe they are just "playing", growth in reading is occurring. "Students learn instructional materials at a faster rate in some cases where computers are used" (Rude, 1986).

Although the parents and teacher play an enormous role in the improvement of low reading skills, the students are also active participants in the process. It is the students' responsibility to read, read, and read some more. "It has been routinely discovered that the more students read outside the class, the stronger their reading skills tend to be" (Rothman, 1990).

Parents, teachers, and the students must work together to develop the attitudes and skills necessary for children to become stronger readers.

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

As a result of implementing Reader's Workshop, during the period of September 1995 through January 1996, the students of the targeted first, second, and third grade classes will exhibit improved reading skills as measured by a sight word vocabulary assessment, a three-part writing assessment including a sound assessment record, writing sample, and observations of the students while writing (at the first grade level), a reading assessment checklist, a student reading attitude survey, and observations of student growth in reading recorded in teacher journals (at all grade levels).

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary for first grade:

1. Assemble an extensive library consisting of reading material of various levels and genres;
2. Compile a list of skills from Houghton Mifflin reading series that will be taught during the first five months of the school year through mini lessons;
3. Create materials and plans for the various reading centers around the room;
4. Create materials and plans for guided reading;
5. Create materials and plans for independent reading;
6. Implement reading portfolios for each of the students.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary for second and third grade:

1. Assemble an extensive library consisting of books of various levels and genres;
2. Compile a list of skills from the Houghton Mifflin reading series and novel units that will be taught during the first five months of the year through mini lessons;
3. Create materials and plans for SQUIRT (Sustained Quiet Uninterrupted Independent Reading Time);

4. Create materials and plans for a reading project time;

5. Implement reading portfolios for each of the students.

Action Plan for the Intervention

First Grade

I. The teacher will assemble an extensive library consisting of reading materials of various levels and genres in the targeted classroom.

A. Materials
   1. Books
      a. Big books
      b. Easy reader books
      c. Picture books
      d. Pattern books
      e. Student/class-made books
      f. Literacy 2000 books
      g. Wright Group Storybox books
      h. Books from Houghton Mifflin reading series
      i. Books of various themes and genres
   2. Poems
      a. Teacher-made poems
      b. Published poems
   3. Songs
      a. Teacher-made songs
      b. Published songs

B. Explanation: A print-rich environment is essential to implementing Reader's Workshop in a classroom.

C. Method

1. Organize books according to theme on a shelf and in baskets in the reading center and around the room for easy access by the children.
2. Display poems and songs on easels and pocket charts around the room.

II. Before the start of school, the teacher will compile a list of skills from Houghton Mifflin reading series that will be taught during the first five months of the school year through mini lessons.

A. Types of Skills

1. Procedural
   a. Choosing a book and putting it back
   b. Rules related to Reader's Workshop
   c. Filling out a reading log
   d. Completing a reading response
   e. Keeping a working reading folder
   f. Directions for reading responses
   g. Self evaluation
   h. Keeping a portfolio
2. Literary
   a. Understanding story elements
   b. Summarizing a story
   c. Sequencing a story
   d. Understanding biographies
   e. Understanding topics/main ideas/supporting details
   f. Comparing and contrasting fact and opinion
   g. Recognizing cause and effect
   h. Utilizing preview and prediction strategies
   i. Making inferences
   j. Comparing fiction and nonfiction
   k. Comparing and contrasting realistic and fantasy story elements
   l. Drawing conclusions
   m. Retelling a story
   n. Understanding characters' point of view

3. Strategies/Skills
    a. Reading new words using
        1. Picture clues
        2. First letter
        3. Decoding skills
        4. Context clues
        5. Skip and return strategy
        6. Guess and return strategy
        7. Sentence structure
        8. Sight words
    b. Phonics Skills
        1. Beginning/middle/ending consonants
        2. Long and short vowels
        3. Consonant clusters
        4. Consonant blends
        5. Vowel pairs
        6. Prefixes and suffixes
        7. Base words
        8. Compound words
        9. Contractions
        10. Syllables
    c. Word meaning
        1. Synonyms and antonyms
        2. Multiple meaning words
        3. Homonyms and homographs

B. Examples of Mini lessons -- Create mini lessons based on categories of skills as needed (Appendix L).

C. Explanation -- The list of skills stated above comes directly from the reading series. These skills are required to be taught by the district. One way to cover the skills is through the use of mini lessons.

D. Method
    1. The teacher will look at the scope and sequence from the Houghton Mifflin teacher's edition. Strategies and skills will come from this book.

2. The teacher will look through other books on Reader's Workshop to develop a list of procedural and literary lessons to be taught.

III. The teacher will create materials and plans for the reading centers around the room.

A. Time line for introduction of the reading centers
   1. During the first week of school, introduce 3-4 centers that the students may already have participated in during kindergarten. Suggested centers include the library center/shared books, reading around the room, the listening center, and the computer.
   2. A new center is introduced every two weeks until the children have had experience with all of them. The teacher can choose, according to the needs of the students, which of the remaining centers to introduce.

B. Reading Centers
   1. Library Center/Shared Books
      a. Materials
         1. See list of reading materials under Roman Numeral I
         2. Chairs, pillows, or bean bag chairs
      b. Plans for implementation
         1. Books will be arranged according to themes on shelves or in baskets in the center
         2. Plenty of carpeted floor space and chairs/ bean bag chairs/pillows will be provided in the library center for comfortable reading
         3. Students will be introduced to this center and the management of this center during the first week of school

2. Reading Around the Room
    a. Materials
        1. Various Pointers
        2. Poems/songs/charts
    b. Plans for implementation
        1. Pointers of various sizes will be put in a can for easy access to the children
        2. Poems/songs/charts will be hung all over the room on walls, pocket charts, or easels
        3. Directions on how to use this center will be modeled the first week of school
3. Listening Center
    a. Materials
        1. Tape recorder with stop, play, eject, and rewind
        2. Headsets for 3 children
        3. Various books and tapes in bags
        4. Container or a pegboard wall for the bags of books
    b. Plans for implementation
        1. A table will be set up in the room to house a tape recorder and headsets
        2. The steps on how to work the tape recorder will be labeled with a picture card or stickers
        3. Some books and tapes will be placed on or right next to the table and substituted with others as themes change or interests decrease
        4. Directions on how to use this center will be modeled the first week of school
4. Computer
    a. Materials
        1. Computer and two chairs
        2. Reading computer games of various levels and skills
    b. Plans for Implementation
        1. The computer will be set up on a table or desk in the classroom

2. Computer games will be introduced one at a time, labeled with a title and a picture, and put in a container next to the computer as introduced

5. Pocket Poem
    a. Materials
        1. Fabric poem pocket
        2. Popsicle stick poem pictures
        3. Poem cards
        4. Some kind of container to hold popsicle sticks and cards
    b. Plans for implementation
        1. The fabric poem pocket will be hung on the wall or from a pocket chart when first introduced
        2. The popsicle stick poem pictures will be placed into the container for students' independent use as they are introduced with the various books or themes
6. Build a Poem
    a. Materials
        1. Pocket chart hung on wall or pocket chart stand
        2. A collection of poems on sentence strips based on the thematic units
        3. A container for the sentence strips
    b. Plans for implementation
        1. The pocket chart will be hung on a wall or from a pocket chart stand when the center is introduced
        2. Sentence strips with the poems written on them will be put in the container for students' independent use as they are introduced during the thematic units
7. Sequencing Center
    a. Materials
        1. Clothes line and clothes pins

2. Sequencing cards/props with pictures or words from poems, songs, or books
3. Container for supplies

b. Plans for implementation

1. The clothes line will be hung from a chalkboard ledge or from any other feasible area in the room the day before this activity is introduced
2. Sequencing cards/props will be put in the container for students' independent use as they are introduced during the thematic units

8. Retelling Center

a. Materials

1. Puppets
2. Flannel board and flannel board pieces
3. Other various retelling props created/gathered according to the theme
4. Container to hold the puppets, flannel board pieces, and other retelling props

b. Plans

1. The flannel board will be placed standing up on an easel or against a table for easy student interaction
2. Puppets, flannel board pieces, and other retelling props will be put in the container for students' independent usage as they are introduced during the thematic units

C. Explanation -- Reading centers are a vital piece of Reader's Workshop. They offer the children a variety of ways to practice and strengthen their reading skills.

IV. Teachers will create materials and plans for the students' guided reading time.

A. Small groups
   1. The students will be divided into five groups of four or five students
   2. The groups will be heterogeneous according to reading ability and gender

B. Materials
   1. Various sets of 4-5 books
   2. Extension writing, art, language, science, social studies, math activities
   3. Reading folders for reading logs and extensions

C. Method
   1. Small groups will meet one-on-one with the teacher 30 or 40 minutes once a week starting the first or second week of school, depending on the teacher's and students' needs
   2. The students in the groups will use individual copies of the same book
   3. Books to be used during guided reading will be determined based on the theme of the week
   4. Books will be logged in by the students on individual reading logs (Appendix M)
   5. In the small groups, the teacher and students will follow a lesson format
      a. Picture Walk -- predictions about the content of the book
      b. Read the story as a whole group
      c. Discuss the story using different literal and inferential questions
      d. Buddy read the story
      e. Extend the story through writing, art, language, science, social studies, or math activities
   6. One literary, procedural, or strategy skill will be focused on during that week

7. Extension activities will be created before the week according to the book or the theme of the week
8. Extensions will be put into the students' reading folder

D. Explanation -- Guided reading is the second important piece of Reader's Workshop. Students are given individual assistance and practice with the various reading skills.

V. Teachers will create materials and plans for an independent reading time.

A. Materials
1. Teacher Materials
a. Poster visually showing possible reading project options
b. Colored construction paper
c. Poster board
d. Popsicle sticks
e. Paper plates
f. Paper bags
g. Writing and drawing paper
h. Yarn
i. Response forms for books (Appendix N)
j. Response form for listening center (Appendix O)
k. Book binding materials
2. Students Materials
a. Writing utensils: markers, crayons, pencils
b. Scissors
c. Glue
d. Working folder

B. Method
1. At the beginning of the year, independent reading will consist mainly of a 10-15 minute time span for students to become acquainted with the literature around the room. Teacher directed responses to the literature will occur approximately once a week to

introduce the students to the various types of responses available for later independent choice. At this time, the teacher will explain how to create one of the following reading projects (Appendix P):

a. Drawing or painting of story elements
b. Sentence starter response
c. Response Forms (Appendix N & O)
d. Story map
e. Letter to author/illustrator
f. Letter to character
g. Puppet show
h. Paper plate character
i. Theme/shape book
j. Book rewrite or spin-off
k. Poster (ex: character wanted poster or advertisement of book)
l. Student creation

2. After the various responses have been introduced, students will be given the opportunity to choose their response after reading a book, poem, or song during this same 10-15 minute time span.
3. As the students become stronger readers, guided reading will no longer continue and independent reading will take it's place. Reading centers will also continue during this 30-40 minute time span offering support for lower reader's and a change of pace for others.
4. This time period provides the opportunity for the teacher to listen to the student's read, observe, assess, and work with individual students.

C. Explanation -- Independent reading is the final piece of reader's workshop. It will allow students time to read books of various levels and genres and will also give them the opportunity to express their understanding and enjoyment of books in a fun and creative way. These celebrations of books will encourage their further interest in reading.

VI. Teachers will create materials and plans for the use of portfolios in the classroom.

A. Materials
   1. One folder for each student
   2. File cabinet or crate to hold folders

B. Implementation -- Once a month, if time permits, students will meet one-on-one with the teacher to discuss his/her progress in reading. At this time, teacher and student will choose one piece of work from the student's working folder to put into the permanent portfolio. This work will be evaluated by the student and teacher

C. Explanation -- Portfolios are an authentic way of keeping track of students' progress in reading, identifying any areas to improve, setting future reading goals, and celebrating growth.

Second and Third Grade

I. Teachers assemble an extensive library consisting of reading material of various levels and genres in the targeted classroom.

A. Materials
   1. Books
      a. Big books
      b. Easy reader books
      c. Pattern Books
      d. Chapter Books
      e. Books of various themes and genres
      f. Student-made books
      g. Books from Houghton Mifflin reading series

B. Explanation: A print-rich environment is essential to implementing Reader's Workshop in a classroom.

C. Method -- Organize books according to theme on a shelf and in baskets in the reading center and around the room for easy access by the children.

II. Before the start of school, teachers will compile a list of skills from Houghton Mifflin reading series that will be taught during the first five months of the school year through mini lessons. The following list suggests mini lessons that could be taught throughout the year as determined by the needs of the students.

A. Types of Skills

1. Procedural

a. Choosing a book and putting it back
b. Rules related to SQUIRT and Reading Project Time
c. Filling out a reading log
d. Completing a reading response
e. Keeping a working reading folder
f. Directions for reading projects
g. Getting ready for a conference
h. Self evaluation
i. Keeping a portfolio

2. Literary

a. Understanding story elements
b. Summarizing a story
c. Sequencing a story
d. Understanding biographies
e. Understanding topics/main ideas/supporting details
f. Comparing and contrasting fact and opinion
g. Recognizing cause and effect
h. Utilizing preview and predict strategies
i. Making inferences
j. Comparing fiction and nonfiction
k. Comparing and contrasting realistic and fantasy story elements

l. Drawing conclusions
m. Retelling a story
n. Understanding characters' points of view

3. Strategies/Skills
   a. Reading new words using
      1. Picture clues
      2. First letter
      3. Decoding skills
      4. Context clues
      5. Skip and return strategy
      6. Guess and return strategy
      7. Sentence structure
      8. Sight words
   b. Phonics Skills
      1. Beginning/middle/ending consonants
      2. Long and short vowels
      3. Consonant clusters
      4. Consonant blends
      5. Vowel pairs
      6. Prefixes and suffixes
      7. Base words
      8. Compound words
      9. Contractions
      10. Syllables
   c. Word meaning
      1. Synonyms and antonyms
      2. Multiple meaning words
      3. Homonyms and homographs

B. Examples of Mini lessons -- Create mini lessons based on categories of skills as needed (Appendix Q).

C. Explanation -- The list of skills stated above comes directly from the reading series and/or novel units. These skills are required by the district to be taught. One way to cover the skills is through the use of mini lessons.

D. Method

1. The teacher will look at the scope and sequence from the Houghton Mifflin teacher's edition. Strategies and skills will come from this book.
2. The teacher will look through other books on Reader's Workshop to develop a list of procedural and literary lessons to be taught.

III. Teachers will create materials and plans for a thirty minute SQUIRT (Sustained Quiet Uninterrupted Independent Reading Time) before school begins.

A. Materials

1. Teacher materials
   a. The Reading-Writing Workshop: Getting Started by Norma Jackson with Paula L. Pillow
   b. Copies of log forms (Appendix R)
   c. Flow chart poster (Appendix S)
2. Student materials
   a. Appropriate reading material as listed under Roman numeral I
   b. Reading folder for reading log and responses

B. Implementation

1. The first week of school the teacher will explain choosing a book through Literature Focus Lesson One. (Appendix T)
2. The following day, the teacher will introduce and model SQUIRT and the students will practice logging in and logging out. (Appendix U)
3. After 3-5 days, the teacher will introduce appropriate responses to a book after SQUIRT. (Appendix V)

C. Explanation -- Implementing Reader's Workshop necessitates an independent reading time. SQUIRT fulfills that requirement.

D. Method -- In order to establish SQUIRT in the classroom, teachers will create appropriate materials, explain necessary procedures, and allow students to practice.

IV. Teachers will create materials and plans for Reading Project Time.

A. Materials
   1. Teacher Materials
      a. Poster visually showing possible reading project options
      b. Colored construction paper
      c. Poster board
      d. Popsicle sticks
      e. Paper plates
      f. Paper bags
      g. Writing and drawing paper
      h. Yarn
      i. Book binding materials
   2. Students Materials
      a. Writing utensils: markers, crayons, pencils
      b. Scissors
      c. Glue
      d. Working folder

B. Implementation
   1. Beginning the third week of school, teachers will model how students will plan and peer conference during a reading project (Appendix W).
   2. The next day, teachers will model a shape book reading project.
   3. Every third day after that, teachers will explain how to create one of the following reading projects (Appendix P):

a. Paper bag book report
b. Puppets
c. Theme book
d. Book rewrite
e. Flip-flop book
f. Paper plate character
g. Cartoon
h. Character wanted poster
i. Venn Diagram comparing story elements in two separate books
j. Book award
k. Triarama
l. Diorama
m. Student creation

4. Reading projects will be completed according to the following schedule: After every three to five short books or after every one to two chapter books.
5. Project Sharing will be scheduled on Fridays as needed.
6. Projects or photographs of projects will be kept in a working reading folder until the student/teacher conference occurs

C. Explanation -- Reading projects will allow students to express their understanding and enjoyment of books in a fun and creative way. These celebrations of books will also encourage further interest in reading.

D. Method -- In order to establish reading projects in the classroom, teachers will assemble appropriate materials, model project options, and provide ample planning, producing, and sharing time.

V. Teachers will create materials and plans for the use of portfolios in the classroom.

A. Materials
   1. One folder for each student
   2. Evaluation sheets (Appendix X)
   3. Post-it notes for tags
   4. File cabinet or crate to hold folders

B. Implementation -- Once a month, if time permits, students will meet one-on-one with the teacher to discuss his/her progress in reading. At this time, teacher and student will choose one piece of work from the student's working folder to put into the permanent portfolio. This work will be evaluated or tagged by the student and teacher.

C. Explanation -- Portfolios are an authentic way of keeping track of students' progress in reading, identifying any areas to improve, setting future reading goals, and celebrating growth.

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, a sight word vocabulary assessment and a three-part writing assessment including a sound assessment record, a writing sample, and observations of the students while writing will be developed for first grade. At all grade levels, a reading assessment checklist covering fluency, expression, decoding skills, and comprehension

will be developed. A reading attitude survey will be developed. Observations of students' growth in reading will be recorded in teacher journals.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve reading skills of the first, second, and third grade students in the targeted school. The implementation of Reader's Workshop was selected to affect the desired changes.

At the first grade level, Reader's Workshop consisted of the implementation of reading centers (library, reading around the room, listening center, computer, poem pocket, building a poem, sequencing center, and retelling center), a guided reading time, and an independent reading time. The focus of Reader's Workshop at the beginning of the year was to involve the students in the various reading centers and a guided reading time. During this 30 minute time span, the majority of the students were involved in the reading centers. A small heterogeneous group of four to five students met with the teacher for guided reading. Here the students and teacher

predicted, read, and discussed a story. A writing, art, language, science, social studies, or math extension was then completed.

Within the first month, the teacher chose to modify Reader's Workshop in a couple of ways. Before the large group of children were able to explore the various reading centers, the students first had to complete some sort of reading response to the book that was just read to the whole class during shared reading time. This response may have included story maps or answering comprehension questions or questions about the story elements through drawings, paintings, and/or written responses. These responses were added because there were not yet enough activities for the students to choose from in the reading centers. Also, this was a good way for the teacher to introduce appropriate ways in which to respond to a book.

When guided reading began, it included the following activities: previewing/predicting the story elements, reading and discussing the story, and extending the story through a writing, math, science, or social studies activity. Eventually the teacher eliminated the extensions due to the fact that guided reading was rushed in order to accomplish everything within the time frame. Without extensions, more time was spent predicting, reading, and

discussing the book. This extra ten to twenty minutes also allowed the teacher to incorporate some mini lessons.

Independent reading was expected to start at the beginning of the year with a 10-15 minute time frame to explore the print in the room. Since the students were already spending much time throughout the day reading as a whole group, in small groups, and independently, the teacher chose to officially start independent reading later in the year.

In late October, independent reading began. Students were given forty-five minutes to log and read books, poems, and songs. They then completed some type of response to the literature. There were a variety of responses from which the children could choose. Most of the responses were ones that the children were introduced to earlier in the year during Reader's Workshop. New ones were modeled and incorporated during the weeks to come.

When log sheets were full, students and the teacher met to evaluate the students' growth and responses. One response was chosen by the students to put into his or her portfolio.

At the second and third grade levels the focus of Reader's Workshop was to allow students independent reading time and provide opportunities for responding to the literature and creating projects based on the books they read.

Implementation began the second week of school. The teachers introduced SQUIRT (Sustained Quiet Uninterrupted Independent Reading Time). The students were taught and given time to practice choosing a book and logging it in and out. SQUIRT took place ten to fifteen minutes per day.

Project time started the third week. This time frame of 30 minutes would eventually consist of SQUIRT, peer conferencing, completion of summary and opinion forms (S.O.S.) and projects, and mini-lessons. During this week, students learned how to complete the summary portion of the S.O.S. form. It focused on the who, what, when, where, why, and how of a story. During the fourth week, students learned how to write an opinion of a story and support it with facts. This was the second part of the S.O.S. form. A first project was also introduced at this time. Thereafter, projects were subjectively introduced.

After the children had opportunities to create several projects, teachers explained and modeled peer conferencing. A peer conference is one child meeting with another to proofread and critique projects.

Initially the teachers required three S.O.S. forms per week. Children were also encouraged to create projects at will. After two weeks of project time, the number of S.O.S. forms was overwhelming

to the teachers and the students. It was decreased to two. This amount was further decreased at the beginning of the second quarter to one. This change ensured the quality of one S.O.S. form while providing ample time for the completion of projects. The teachers also established a guideline which required all students to write a summary/opinion before beginning a project. Teachers wanted a balance of time spent on both products.

In January, new strategies were implemented to further develop the students' summarizing skills. In second grade, a story frame outline was presented to the students in order to provide a visual aid to use when summarizing (Appendix Y). Also it established a structure that in turn enabled the students to write their response in complete sentences.

In third grade the teacher replaced the who, what, when, where, why, and how strategy with a who, when, where, problem, and solution strategy (Appendix Z). Students struggled with answering the why and how questions, because in many of the stories chosen by the students, these questions were not always applicable. This different perspective allowed students to take the next step in summarizing.

Throughout the course of the program, students and teachers chose projects to put in portfolios. Before placement of projects,

students evaluated their work, met with the teacher, and discussed their growth.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the extent to which Reader's Workshop affected reading skills of the targeted first grade classroom, kindergarten sight words and the first list of sight words in first grade were examined.

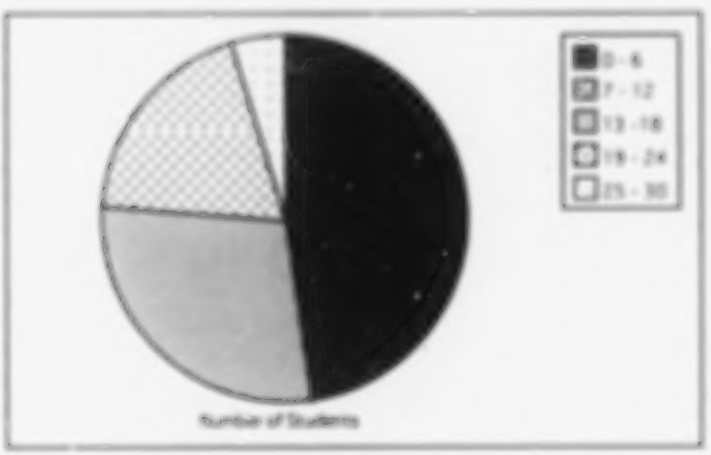

Figure 6

Kindergarten Sight Words in September

(Appendix A)

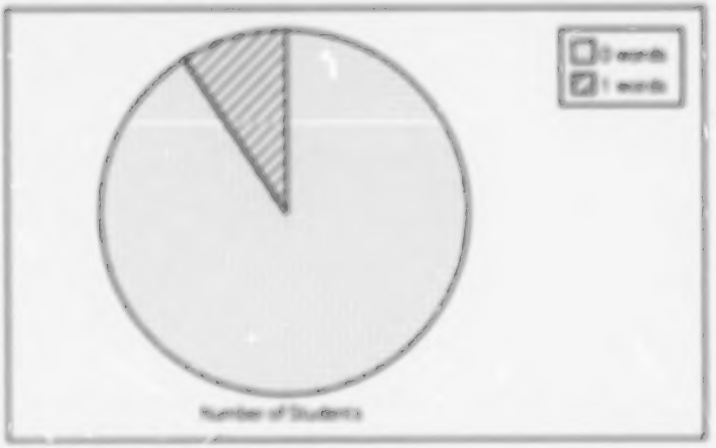

Figure 7

Reassessment of Kindergarten Sight Words in January

(Appendix AA)

In comparing the two graphs, it is evident that students made great improvement in sight word recognition from September to January. It is particularly noteworthy that all but 2 students learned all 30 words. The two remaining students are one word away from successfully learning all 30 words.

A new list of sight words was assessed in late November. The list of 25 words was made up of words frequently seen in the first book of the students' reading series.

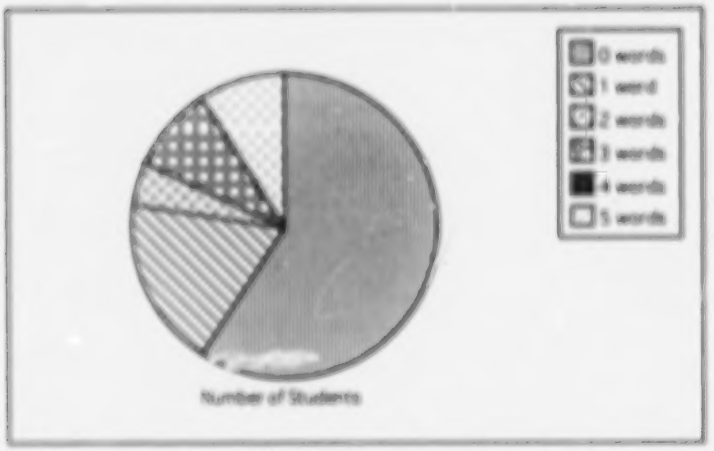

Figure 8

Number of Missed Words -- First list

(Appendix BB)

According to this graph, it can be assumed that the students are continuing to progress in their recognition of sight words. Of interest here is the fact that all students have learned at least 20 of the 25 words. Most of the students who have not yet mastered these sight words are able to sound some of them out.

Another tool used to assess the extent to which Reader's Workshop influenced reading skills in the first grade classroom was a three-part writing assessment which included a one-word sound assessment (Appendix B), a writing sample from December, and teacher observations of the students while writing.

From these tools it can be assumed that of the 22 students, all were confident writers and all made improvement to some degree in this area. When evaluating the students' ability in writing words and sentences, the teacher noted that two students' writing included more actual spellings than approximations. Four students were writing close approximations to the words with occasional vowel substitutions. Eleven students were writing mostly correct beginning, middle, and ending consonants and were substituting the vowel sounds more often. Five students relied mostly on sight words. These students wrote beginning, middle, and ending consonant sounds, yet they were not always correct. Vowels were more difficult for these students.

The next tool used to assess the affect of Reader's Workshop on first grade reading skills was an oral reading sample and checklist (Appendix C). Each student chose to read one of two books. The teacher evaluated their reading ability and skills on the checklist. According to this assessment, all students showed growth in their reading development.

Of the 22 students, seven were reading fluently with expression. They used multiple reading strategies to decode unknown words when necessary. Three of these students needed to pause a little more often to figure out unknown words, but over all,

reading was fluent and comprehension was strong. Three students were reading less fluently, pausing more often to decode unfamiliar words. They had three or four reading strategies to draw upon when decoding. They read with some expression. Comprehension was good. Eight students were choppy readers, reading word by word. There was little expression. These students used two or three strategies to decode words. They relied on sight words, sounding out skills, and picture clues to figure out words. Comprehension was still good. Of these seven, three read much slower, stopping more often to decode. The remaining four students mostly relied on sight words and picture clues. Two of the four were beginning to sound out the words. Comprehension was somewhat impeded by the time and energy spent decoding.

At second and third grade an oral reading sample and checklist were used to evaluate how Reader's Workshop influenced students' reading skills (Appendix D). Growth was observed and noted in the development of reading strategies for decoding, fluency, expression, and literal and inferential comprehension.

In second grade the majority of the students used multiple strategies for decoding. Four relied mostly on sounding out and one looked at the first letter and guessed the word. Of the 22 students, 15 read fluently with some level of expression. Comprehension was

strong. Seven were less fluent due to difficulties with decoding. These students used little or no expression. Comprehension was affected by this. Of these seven, three read the selection word by word, stopping frequently to decode.

The majority of the students in third grade were fluent readers. They had minimal difficulty decoding words due to their extensive repertoire of reading strategies. They used appropriate expression when reading. Their comprehension was well-developed. Of the 21 students, only five were still challenged in this area. Although these five were struggling, they began to implement some of the reading strategies. Expression, fluency, and comprehension were slowly improving.

In addition to the curriculum based assessments, the teachers felt it important to gather information about the students' attitude towards reading and Reader's Workshop. A reading attitude survey was given at the end of the scheduled intervention (Appendix CC).

Overall, the general attitude about reading was positive. All but five of the 65 students of the first, second, and third grade classes expressed enjoyment towards reading. Some of the quotes given when asked the question, "How do you feel about reading?" were: "Good. You can learn new things and learn how to laugh at a

story or a joke"; "I feel excited about reading!"; "I like reading! I read a hard book today!"

When asked the question "How do you feel about yourself as a reader?", all but three of the 65 students answered very positively. Some responses included, "I truthfully think I'm a good reader. Once I was reading a book with my mom, and I read faster than her.", "Great! I usually know most of the words in the hard books.", "I am good at it. If a friend needs help, I can help her."

Another question asked on the survey was, "What was your favorite part of Reader's Workshop?" At first grade, eight students answered reading was their favorite part of Reader's Workshop. Twelve named the responses as their favorite. When it came to the question about what to change about Reader's workshop, most of these students expressed they wanted more time to do their favorite activity.

Reading and project time was also a favorite for second and third grade. Between the two grade levels, 12 students chose reading to be their favorite and 26 chose project time. Most of these students also wanted an extended time frame to do these activities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on the effect of Reader's Workshop on reading skills, the students displayed growth in reading. The time given to the students to read, respond to, and discuss literature in the targeted classrooms appeared to have improved reading decoding and comprehension skills. Even though improvement occurred, the teachers question to what degree this intervention caused the growth. Reading was not taught and/or practiced only during Reader's Workshop, but also through shared reading, formal instruction with the basal/novels, and across the disciplines. Through the data it is evident that growth occurred. The teachers are reluctant to attribute all of this growth to Reader's Workshop.

One of the most beneficial outcomes of Reader's Workshop was the more pronounced positive attitudes towards reading and responding. All but two of the targeted first, second, and third graders expressed enthusiasm for reading and confidence in themselves as readers. Instilling a passion towards reading is a goal of most teachers. When students have confidence and the desire to read, reading improves.

Another noted outcome of Reader's Workshop was the students' improved time on task. They anxiously looked forward to and

celebrated the onset of Reader's Workshop. Children cheered and often exclaimed, "Yes!" when the teachers announced Reader's Workshop. Students were always disappointed when Reader's Workshop had to be shortened or canceled due to unforeseen schedule changes.

Lastly, the teachers concluded that they would all continue Reader's Workshop throughout the remainder of this year and also begin again next year with a few modifications.

The recommendations for first grade include the use of more volunteers during Reader's Workshop. Utilize parents and reading buddies to come in during this time to read with the students. A second suggestion is to not rush into independent reading, rather focus solely on guided reading and the implementation of reading centers until early November. Take this time to build a strong foundation for independent reading -- how to choose a book, appropriate responses to a book, and improved reading skills.

The second and third grade recommendations include the changing of S.O.S. expectations to once a week and adapting the S.O.S. summary section to include more lines. Also adding volunteers in the classroom and adapting peer conferencing forms to a checklist will allow teachers to spend less time with the preparation and implementation of the program and more time reading and

interacting with the students. Therefore, Reader's Workshop will run more efficiently.

Reader's Workshop influenced the teachers' perspective and methods of assessment and instruction. Prior to this intervention, the teachers used less valuable assessment tools when evaluating reading. Through the assessment techniques of this intervention, the teachers viewed the students' abilities more clearly. The amount and type of assessment used gave the teachers a better understanding of the students' strengths and weaknesses.

Reader's Workshop reaffirmed to the teachers the importance of a time set aside every day to read silently and respond to the literature. The teachers witnessed improved reading skills, and most heartening, enjoyment and enthusiasm toward reading in the eyes of the students. Due to these positive outcomes, the teachers have chosen to incorporate Reader's Workshop into their curriculum for years to come.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Spreadsheet of Kindergarten Missed Sight Words (September)

Appendix B

First Grade Sound Assessment Record

Sound Assessment Record

Directions: Say each word outloud and have the children write the words on a seperate piece of paper. Transfer the child's exact spelling onto their individual sound assessment record.

Name _____

	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date
1. rig						
2. hit						
3. den						
4. hot						
5. kit						
6. camp						
7. green						
8. drive						
9. shopping						
10. ante						
11. choke						
12. jelly						
13. thin						
14. seven						
15. zipper						
16. shut						
17. market						
18. quiet						
19. flower						
20. sweet						

Appendix C

First Grade Oral Reading Assessment

Reading Assessment

Student_____

Types of Books
- appropriate?

Strategies for Decoding
- picture clues
- first letter
- decodes
- context clues
- skip/return
- guess/return
- rereads
- sentence structure
- sight words

Fluency
- sounds out every word
- reads a few words and stops
- word by word (choppy reading)
- occasionally stops
- read fluently but ignores punctuation
- fluent reading with appropriate pauses

Expression
- no expression
- some expression
- good expression

Literal Comprehension
- makes appropriate predictions
- recalls facts
- identifies story elements
- retells beginning/middle/end
- states main idea
- states supporting ideas

Inferential Comprehension
- makes inferences based on details of story
- infers main idea
- hypothesizes the "What if..."
- expresses character's feelings

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Appendix D

Second and Third Grade Oral Reading Checklist

Reading Assessment

Student

	Date	Date
Type of Book		
type of book		
appropriate?		
Strategies for Decoding		
picture clues		
first letter		
decodes		
context clues		
self-corrects		
guess-rereads		
rereads		
sentence structure		
sight words		
Fluency		
sounds out every word		
reads a few words and stops		
word by word (choppy reading)		
occasionally stops		
read fluently but ignores punctuation		
fluent reading with appropriate pauses		
Expression		
no expression		
some expression		
good expression		
Literal Comprehension		
makes appropriate predictions		
recalls facts		
identifies story elements		
retells beginning, middle and end		
states main idea		
states supporting ideas		
Inferential Comprehension		
makes inferences based on details of story		
infers main idea		
hypothesizes the "What if..."		
expresses character's feelings		

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Appendix E

Teacher Interview

Teacher Interview

In your professional opinion, what are the three most significant factors causing low reading skills among your students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher Interview

In your professional opinion, what are the three most significant factors causing low reading skills among your students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F

Spreadsheet of Results of Teacher Interview

	# of people
A	20
B	10
C	6
D	6
E	5
F	4
G	4
H	3
I	3
J	2
K	2
L	1
M	1

Appendix G

Parent Survey

Parent and Student Reading Survey

1. How much time at home do you spend each day

	Child	Mom Dad (Circle)
reading	_____	_____
watching TV	_____	_____
playing with friends	_____	_____
doing homework	_____	_____
playing video games	_____	_____
playing computer games	_____	_____
writing (letters, stories)	_____	_____
playing/talking with each other	_____	

2. Do you have a library card?

_____ _____

3. Do you subscribe to a magazine?

_____ _____

4. Do you read the newspaper?

_____ _____

(OVER)

5. Parent: In what ways do you encourage your child to read?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What other activities in or out of the home does your family enjoy?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Dear Parents,

I, along with my two colleagues, am currently working on a Master's degree with St. Xavier University. We are in the process of implementing Reader's Workshop into our classrooms as part of our action research project. The purpose of this project is to increase children's reading skills.

The attached survey will assist us in gathering data. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You do not need to put your name on the survey, just circle mom or dad or both depending on who completed the survey with your child. Please return your survey to school by _____.

Thank you for your participation!

Sincerely,

Appendix H

Spreadsheet of Time Spent Reading Graph

	# of children	# of adults
0	2	0
5	1	0
10-20	13	3
30	20	7
45-60	6	5
60	5	12
90	0	10
120+	0	8
blank	2	4

Appendix I

Spreadsheet of Time Spent Writing Graph

	# of children	# of adults
0	18	10
5-10	3	0
15-20	13	5
30	6	7
60	1	2
120+	0	1
occas.	2	1
blank	7	13

Appendix J

Spreadsheet of Time Spent Watching TV Graph

	# of children	# of adults
0	1	3
0.25	0	1
0.5	5	3
1	18	14
1.5	9	2
2	12	13
3	1	3
4	1	2
6	0	1
blank	2	5

Appendix K

Student Survey (September)

Reading Attitude Survey

Name _____

Directions: Ask the student the questions and give him/her time to think. Prompt the child to give more detailed answers. Ask the child to explain why.

What is reading? _____

How do you feel about reading? _____

What kinds of things do you like to read ? _____

Do you read with anyone in your family? Who? When? What? How do you feel about it?

Why do you think it is important to be a good reader? _____

How do you feel about yourself as a reader? _____

What is hard about reading for you? _____

Appendix L

Examples of First Grade Mini Lessons

Procedural Skills

Most of these skills were taught tnrough direct instruction and modeling.

Literary Skills

These skills were discussed in relationship to the book that was being read.

Some follow-up activities to support these discussions included story maps, character webs, Venn Diagrams, If/Then statements, and KWL charts (What do you know about a topic, what do you want to know, what have you learned).

Strategies/Skills

Reading strategies were taught, modeled, and practiced by the students using the following wheel as a reference.

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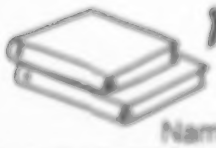
Mini lessons which dealt with phonics skills were given throughout the day in relationship to the songs, poems, big books, or other books that were read. Some ways in which this was accomplished was through pointing to the words or masking the words, the framing of a letter, cluster of letters, or word with a cardboard frame (square cut-out) or a person's hands. With these activities, the teacher asked questions dealing with the phonics skill being emphasized at the time. Some of these questions included: "Who can point to the word that begins with the cluster 'th'?" or "Who can mask the vowels which make the long 'o' sound in the word 'boat'?"

Some other mini lessons which reinforced the needs of the students in terms of phonics included:

1. Brainstorming sessions -- writing as many words as possible in relationship to the phonics skill being emphasized.
2. Word Hunts -- searching all over the room or school for words with particular vowel sounds, beginning sounds, or consonant clusters.
3. Word Sorts -- sorting a group of words according to the phonics skills being emphasized.
4. Class Books -- Making individual pages to class books using the words that were brainstormed earlier.
5. Word games -- crossword puzzles or word search games.
6. Word Bingo or Memory Match

Appendix M

First Grade Reading Log



MY READING LOG

Name _____

Date	Title	Author

Appendix N

Response Forms for Books

Dear _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

From _____

_____

Dear _____,

From,

Name _____

Name _____

Title _____

Author _____

Rating:

Reading Response Log

Name _____

Title _____

Author _____

Respond to the Book

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Draw a Picture

Who?

What?

Home

Appendix O

Response Form for Listening Center

Title: _____

Appendix P

Examples of Reading Project Ideas

Alternatives to Workbooks and Skill Sheets - Grades 1-3

The following child-centered activities combine all four language arts components and involve students in active learning. Replace workbooks and skill sheets with purposeful, student made activities that can be used to teach skills.

1. Shape books

2. Paper bag book reports

3. Puppets

4. Theme books

5. Book rewrite

6. Write "guzo" stories on chart paper

7. Story maps (page 43)

8. Flip-flap book (page 41)

9. Paper plate characters

10. Reading response logs (page 44)

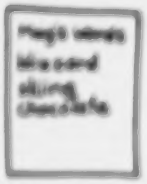
11. ABC books

12. Write ups for work-love books

13. Class books (Each child contributes one page.)

14. Respond to a book (tell, write, draw or dramatize)

15. Write character dialogue



16. Personal word books

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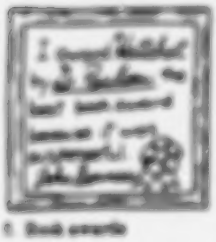
Alternatives to Workbooks and Skill Sheets - Grades 4-6

1. Journals

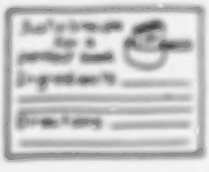
2. Research logs

3. Dioramas (page 29)

4. Book response projects



5. Book awards



6. Recipe for the perfect book/character ending

7. Venn diagrams (compare characters, settings, authors)

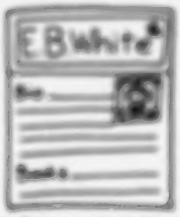
8. Alliteration album

9. Pictorial poster of main character

10. Cartoons

11. Reading response logs (page 40)

12. Flip-flap book (page 42)



13. Poster projects (time line of events, character comparison chart, author study)

14. Novel folders (Student designs folder to hold novel study papers.)

15. Double entry journal (Student copies a book passage and writes a personal reaction.)

16. Folded books (no sheet book, page 43 book pages 38, 40)

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Appendix Q

Examples of Mini Lessons for Second and Third Grade

LITERATURE FOCUS LESSON 3

Summarizing

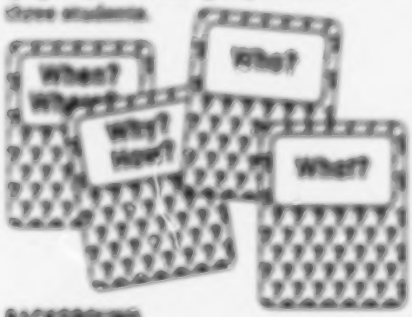
OBJECTIVE
Students will be able to write a short summary of a book.

TIME FRAME: 5–10 days

ADVANCE PREPARATIONS

1. Make one copy of the Summary/Opinion & Support (S.O.S.) sheet (page 48) for each student.

2. Prepare one set of Summary Cards (page 74) for each group of two or three students.



BACKGROUND
Students need to be able to summarize to complete the daily S.O.S. sheet. Depending on the age and abilities of your students, you may need to repeat the lesson several times with different books.

LITERATURE SUGGESTIONS
Any high-interest literature appropriate for your students' age level will work for this lesson.

Lesson Outline

GUIDANCE
Read a book to your students and discuss what information should be included in a summary of the book. Review the difference between main ideas and details. Discuss which details would not be necessary in a summary.

Divide the class into groups of two to four students. Give each group a set of Summary Cards and a different book. Each group must keep the name of its book a secret. After reading the book, students take turns drawing a Summary Card and making an appropriate statement about the story. (In smaller groups some students may need to draw two cards.) All of the statements together will form a summary of the

book. Students must decide in what order they will present their summary statements.

As each group finishes, collect the books and randomly set them on the chalk ledge. After each group presents its summary statement, the class will try to name the book.

PRACTICE

Introduce the S.O.S. sheet. Explain that students will use this form to write summaries of the books they read during SQUIRT. Each student will complete one S.O.S. sheet daily. If a student reads only part of a book in a day, the summary should relate to those pages.

Note: You may want to use the modified S.O.S. sheet (page 73) with beginning readers. Introduce it by retelling or reading *The Three Little Pigs*. Summarize the story, then model how to draw pictures to show who the main characters are in the story, what event the story was mostly about, and why it happened or how it was resolved.

Ask students to write summaries of the books they read during SQUIRT. Have students share their summaries in small groups. Use the Summary Cards to identify the important information needed in each student's summary.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. After presenting this lesson, you can begin evaluating students' S.O.S. summaries (see pages 29–31). However, delay formal grading until after you present Lesson 5, Supporting Opinions. You can prepare students for Lesson 5 as you read aloud each day. After asking students to summarize the reading selection, begin soliciting their opinions of the book and have them explain their reasoning.

2. Give each student a Summary Cards page and a 9-by-12 inch piece of manila paper. Instruct students to:

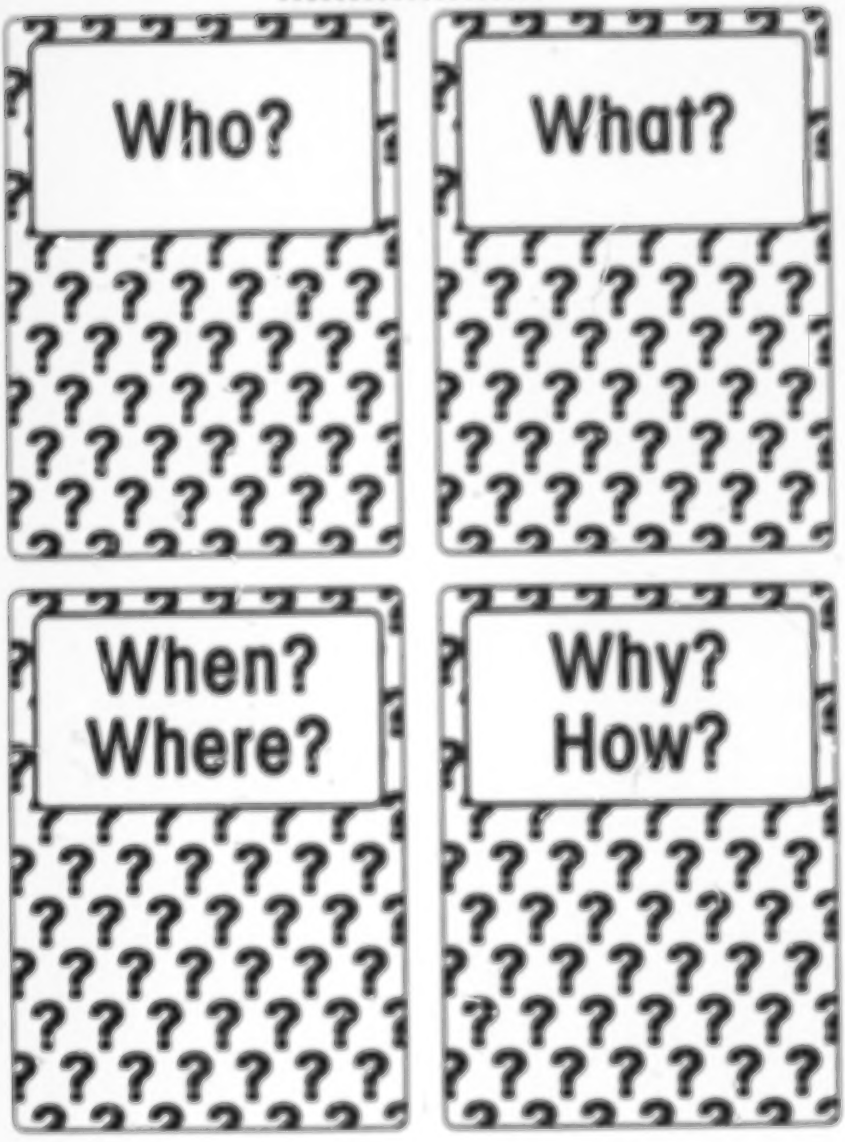
- Fold the manila paper into fourths
- Cut on the folds
- Fold each of the pieces into fourths again
- Cut on the folds

This will give each student 16 small cards. Students will use the Summary Card page as their playing board. They will not cut it apart.

Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Each student needs to list 10 to 20 books he or she has heard or read. Reproduce the Summary Spinner (page 78) for each group. Each player chooses a book from his or her list to summarize. Students take turns spinning and writing an appropriate summary statement about the chosen book on one of their cards. They read this card aloud to the group and place it on top of the corresponding Summary Card on the playing board. Then it is the next player's turn. Players forfeit a turn if the spinner lands on a summary question they've already answered.

When a player covers all of the Summary Cards on his or her board, the player calls out "Super Summary." Then the player names the chosen book, reads the summary aloud, and places the cards together to make a book. The player with the most books at the end of play or the first player to make four books is the winner.

SUMMARY CARDS



SUMMARY SPINNER

SPINNER DIRECTIONS:

Use a pencil and a large paper clip to make an easy, smooth-working spinner. Place the end of the paper clip over the center dot on the spinner. Keep the paper clip spinner in place by using one hand to hold the point of the pencil on the dot. Spin with the other hand.

LITERATURE FOCUS LESSON 4

Identifying Fact and Opinion

OBJECTIVE
Students will be able to distinguish between fact and opinion.

TIME FRAME: 1–3 days

ADVANCE PREPARATIONS
Reproduce the Fact-Opinion Die found on page 78. (If you will be using the Extension Activity, also reproduce the Story Map Die.) You will need two dice for each group of three to five students.

BACKGROUND
If you have been asking students to share their opinions of your daily literature selection, they will quickly understand the difference between fact and opinion. However, be aware that when young readers agree with an opinion they hear, they frequently identify it as a fact. The more opportunities they have to discuss their own opinions and hear other opinions discussed, the clearer the differences will become.

LITERATURE SUGGESTIONS
Any humorous books appropriate to your students' age level may be used. The following suggestions have been used successfully with elementary students:

- *Amelia Bedelia* books by Peggy Parish
- *Mommy Goes to School* by B. Wiseman

Lesson Outline

GUIDANCE
Read a humorous book aloud. Have volunteers summarize it. Then ask students to vote for the part they thought was funniest. Point out the many different opinions in the class. Explain the difference between fact and opinion. Make a variety of statements about the book and ask students to identify each statement as fact or opinion.

PRACTICE
Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Let each group choose a book to read. After group members have

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read their book. They will take turns rolling two Fact and Opinion dice. If one die shows Fact and the other shows Opinion, the player must give a fact and an opinion statement about the book. If both dice show Fact, the player must state two facts. If both dice show Opinion, the player must state two opinions. Players score one point for each appropriate fact given and two points for each opinion. Players get zero points if their facts or opinions have already been used by a previous player. The first player to reach ten points is the winner.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Make the *Fact-Opinion* game described in the lesson more challenging by using a Fact-Opinion die and a Story Map die. Follow the same basic procedures, except that students must make a fact or opinion statement for the specific category shown on the Story Map die.

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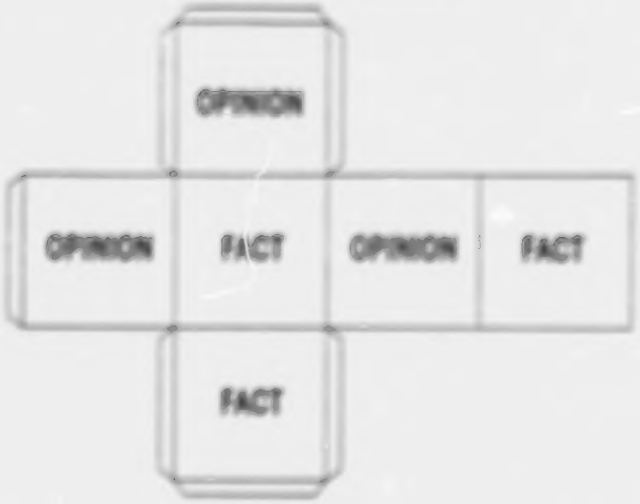
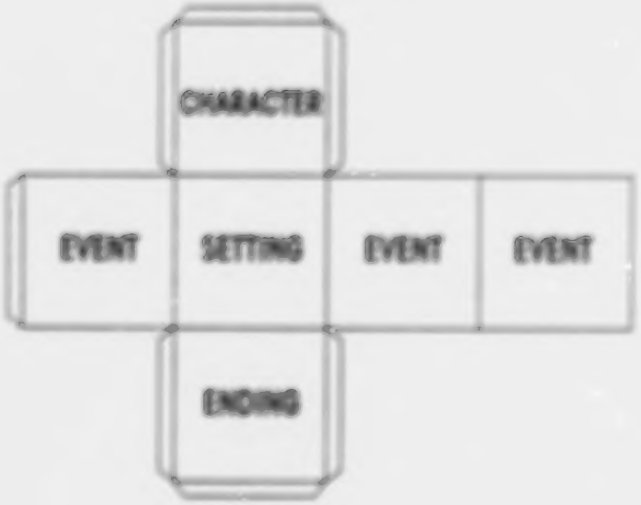
FACT-OPINION DIE



STORY MAP DIE



LITERATURE FOCUS LESSON 5

Supporting Opinions

OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to give an opinion and support it with details from the story or their personal experiences.

TIME FRAME: 1–3 days

ADVANCE PREPARATIONS

None needed.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Opinion & Support section of the S.O.S. sheet is to get students to think about why they do or do not like their reading selections. In other words, how well do they relate to the stories?

LITERATURE SUGGESTIONS

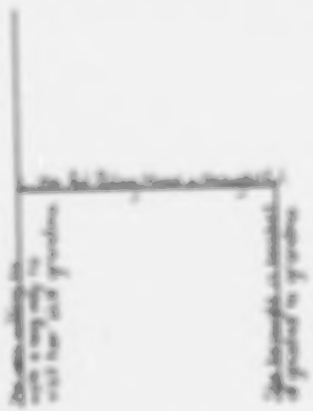
Any high-interest literature appropriate for your students' age level will work for this lesson.

Lesson Outline

GUIDANCE

Read a book aloud to your students. Ask them to summarize the story. Then review the difference between facts and opinions.

Explain that an opinion without supporting information is like a chair without legs. Give each group of three to five students a piece of paper and ask them to draw a simple chair. Next, they must make an opinion statement about the literature selection you read aloud. They write this opinion on the seat of the chair. Then they write supporting information on each leg of the chair. Share these with the class.



PRACTICE

Introduce the Opinion & Support section of the S.O.S. form. Discuss the categories listed in the opinion box. Students may want to consider these aspects of their book before responding.

Ask students to reread one of their S.O.S. summaries. Next, have them think about whether or not they liked their books and why. Initially, it may be helpful to display the following sentence starter:

I thought my book was _____ (sad, funny, scary, etc.) when . . .

As soon as possible, remove the sentence starter and encourage students to think about how their books made them feel.

Point out that the opinion box has three stars across the top of it. Students will use these stars to rate their books. They color in all three stars if a book is excellent, two stars if it's good, and one star if it's just okay. They don't color any stars if they dislike the book.

Remind students of the Opinion Chair. Have each student write an opinion statement and give supporting reasons for it. When all students have completed this task, divide them into groups of three to five. After each student in the group has read his or her opinion statement, the group discusses whether or not the opinion was supported. If not, group members should offer suggestions and allow the student to revise the statement.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Play "Soup's On!" Explain that this phrase is an idiom that means that a meal is ready. Work in small groups. Each group draws a simple table on a piece of paper, then adds a large bowl sitting on the table. Students label the bowl with the title of their book. Next, have them draw a chair at each end of the table and think about the kind of discussions the book characters might have at mealtime. Label each chair with the name of a character. Students should then write an opinion from one of the characters on the seat of one chair, and another opinion from a different character on the second chair. Finally, have them list supporting information on the chair legs.

Procedural Skills

Most of these skills were taught through direct instruction and modeling.

Literary Skills

These skills were discussed in relationship to the book that was being read.

Some follow-up activities to support these discussions included story maps, character webs, Venn diagrams, If/Then statements, and KWL charts (What do you know about a topic, what do you want to know, and what have you learned).

Strategies/Skills

In order to reinforce the various reading strategies the following method was taught:

Stop and Think -- If a child comes to an unknown word, he is taught to stop and go back to the word, sound it out, skip it and read on and return, and/or take an educated guess according to the sounds of the word or the context of the sentence.

Some other mini lessons which reinforced the needs of the students in terms of phonics and word meaning included:

1. Brainstorming sessions -- writing as many words as possible in relationship to the phonics skill being emphasized.
2. Word Sorts -- sorting a group of words according to the phonics skill being emphasized.
3. Word games -- crossword puzzles or word search games.
4. Writing sentences or stories using words brainstormed earlier.

Appendix R

Second and Third Grade Reading Log

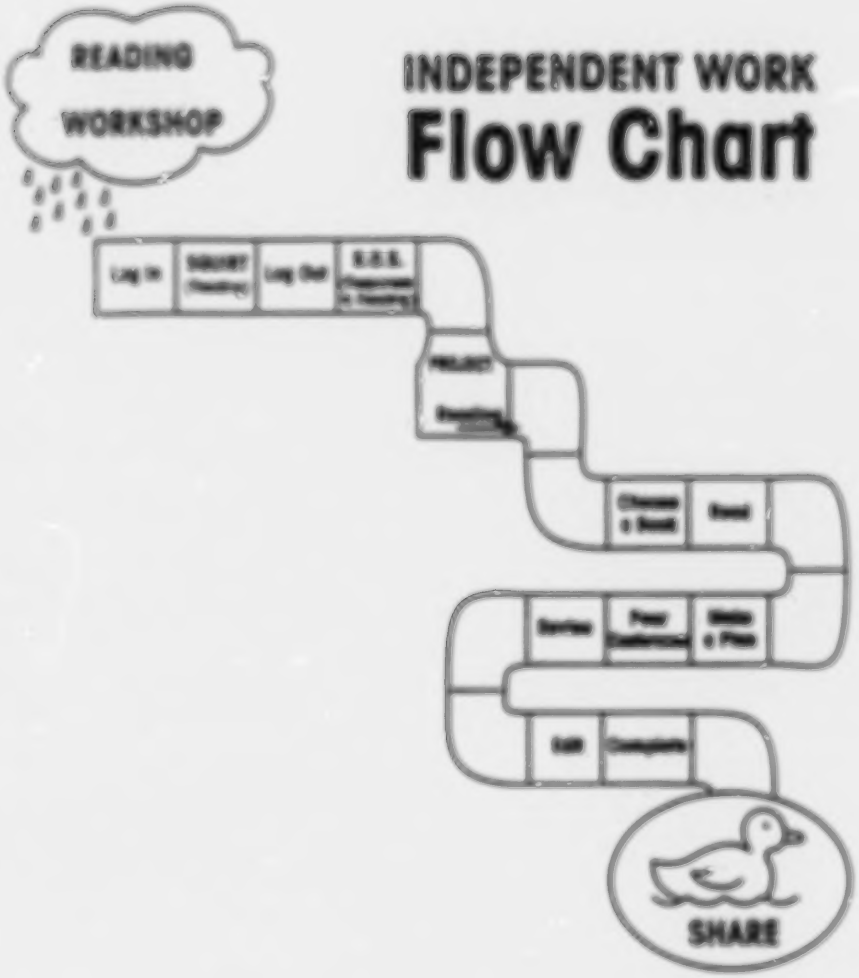
Name _____

MY READING LOG

Date	Author	Title	Pages

Appendix S

Flow Chart Poster and Pieces



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2 (Daily Independent Work Task)

Log In

FLOW CHART BULLETIN BOARD PIECES

3 (Daily independent work Task)

SQUIRT

(Reading)

4 (Daily independent work Task)

Log Out

FLOW CHART BULLETIN BOARD PIECES

5 (Daily Independent Work Task)

S.O.S.

(Responses to Reading)

Project

Reading

1 (Reading Project Arm)

Choose a Book

2 (Reading Project Arm)

Read

FLOW CHART BULLETIN BOARD PIECES

3 (Reading Project Arm)

Make a Plan

4 (Reading Project Arm)

Peer Conference

5 (Reading Project Arm)

Revise

FLOW CHART BULLETIN BOARD PIECES

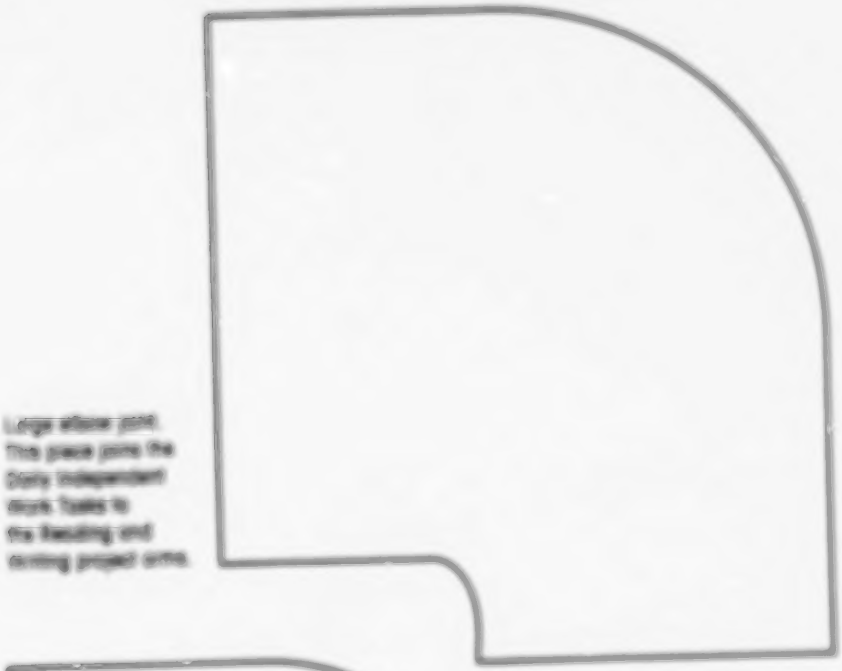
6 (Reading Project Arm)

Edit

7 (Reading Project Arm)

Complete

FLOW CHART BULLETIN BOARD PIECES



Large elbow joint. This piece joins the Dairy Independent study Tasks to the Reading and Writing project arms.

Plain shield. You will need to reproduce enough elbow joints to make all the turns on your Flow Chart. Twelve elbow joints are needed to arrange the pieces as shown on page 18.

LITERATURE FOCUS LESSON 1

Choosing Books

OBJECTIVE
Students will learn strategies for choosing appropriate books to read independently.

TIME FRAME: 1–2 days

ADVANCE PREPARATIONS

1. Gather a selection of high-interest literature to read aloud.

2. Display four to five different types of books (riddles, fairy tales, poetry, etc.) along the ledge of the chalkboard.

3. Put six to eight books in a paper bag. Include a variety of different types. Prepare one bag for every group of three to five students.

BACKGROUND
Many students, even older ones, do not know how to choose books to read independently. They must develop strategies that will help them choose books on their reading and interest levels. They also need to be given permission to stop reading books they find too difficult or are not enjoying.

LITERATURE SUGGESTIONS
Any high-interest literature appropriate for your students' age level will work for this lesson.

Lesson Outline

GUIDANCE
Read your literature selection aloud. Explain that there are many different kinds of books—mysteries, fairy tales, animal stories, biographies, etc. Classify the literature selection you read aloud.

Direct students to think about what makes them want to read certain books. It may be the cover, the subject, or a recommendation from a friend. Then discuss reasons why they may not want to read a book. Remind students that it is a wise decision to return books that are too difficult or are uninteresting.

PRACTICE

1. Introduce the 5 Finger Rule. Ask students to read a page of their books and put up one finger for each word they do not know and cannot figure out.

If they find five unknown words on that page, they should probably choose another book. Next, as they continue reading, have them put up one finger for each page they read. They will usually become immersed in a book in the first five pages of text. After reading five pages, they may choose to keep the book or put it back and choose another.

3. Give each group of four students a bag containing assorted books and have each group member choose a book to read. Allow about five minutes for group members to share their reasons for choosing particular books. Next ask them to use the 5 Finger Rule to help them tell if they can read their books independently. If so, they will keep the books to read during *Literature Focus* lesson 2. If not, they will choose other books.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Make a bookmark to remind students of the 5 Finger Rule.

1. Fold a 9-by-6 inch piece of colored construction paper in half.

2. Place a hand on the paper with the edge of the palm on the fold. With fingers closed, trace one hand on the paper.

3. Cut out the hand shape. Be sure to cut through both layers of paper.

4. Draw lines to make fingers on the outside of each hand. Students write their names on the palm and different kinds of books they like to read on each finger.

5. Show students how to slip the hand over a page to hold their place in the book. Use the bookmark as a reminder of the 5 Finger Rule for choosing a book.

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LITERATURE FOCUS LESSON 2

Independent Reading

OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to follow procedures for reading and recording their SQUIRT (Sustained Quiet Uninterrupted Independent Reading Time) books.

TIME FRAME: 1-2 days

ADVANCE PREPARATIONS

1. Each student needs a pocket folder. They will use this to prepare their Reading Folder (see page 28).

2. Reproduce a copy of My Reading Log (page 44) for each student.

3. Plan the specific rules you will enforce during SQUIRT.
For example: Remain quiet.
Stay seated. Read!

BACKGROUND

Students should get into the habit of selecting their reading material before SQUIRT begins. This will allow them to focus their time on reading a book, not choosing a book.

You will need to intervene if a student consistently spends most [illegible] choosing books than reading them, or frequently returns unread books. Reluctant readers often use this delaying tactic. You may need to select three or four appropriate books for each of those students and let them choose one each to read.

LITERATURE SUGGESTIONS

Student-selected literature.

Lesson Outline

GUIDANCE

Ask students to pretend that someone gives them ten minutes to spend $1,000 in a toy store. At the end of ten minutes they have to return any money they have not spent. Will they use the time trying to decide what they want or buying toys?

Likewise, students will gain most from independent reading if they spend their time reading, not choosing books.

Direct your students' attention to the Log In, SQUIRT, and Log Out signs on the Flow Chart. Explain and model each task.

LOG IN

Before reading, students must record the date, title, and author of the chosen book, and the number of the first page they will be reading. Some picture books are not numbered. Discuss what to do in that case. (For example, they might use one for the first story page and count pages from there.)

SQUIRT

Explain that this stands for Sustained Quiet Uninterrupted Independent Reading Time. Discuss your rules for SQUIRT.

LOG OUT

Students record the number of the last page they read.

Stress the importance of logging in before beginning SQUIRT. Then, if a student's independent reading time is interrupted for any reason, he or she can quickly record the last page read. This will prevent unnecessary delays when you are ready to begin a whole class lesson.

Help students label and prepare their reading folders. Give each child a copy of My Reading Log. Use brads to fasten it to the Reading Folder.

PRACTICE

1. Be sure each student has selected a book.
2. Have students log in, using information about their book.
3. As students complete this information, they should begin SQUIRT. Allow five to ten minutes for this first independent reading experience.
4. Instruct students to log out.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Brainstorm categories of literature—for example, fairy tales, nonfiction, mysteries, bear books, etc. Make a label for each category and place it on a box or tub. As students finish books encourage them to place them in the appropriate containers. Later the class may decide on different or additional categories and then reorganize the books accordingly.

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Appendix V

S.O.S. Resonse Form

Name _____ Date _____

SALT WORKS

Summary _____

Opinion/ Support _____

S.O.S.

Title _____

Author _____ Pages Read _____

Summary

OPINION AND SUPPORT

Appendix W

Peer Conference Summary

PEER CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Name _____ Date _____

Project Title _____

Conference Partners _____

1. What is my story / project about?
2. What do you like best about it?
3. Did I say anything confusing? What?
4. Do I need to add more details? Where?

____ beginning ____ characters ____ plot
____ setting ____ ending ____ project design

Summary _____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix X

Second and Third Grade Portfolio Evaluation Sheet

Portfolio Evaluation

Name_____

Date_____

The piece of work I chose this month is_____

_____

I chose this piece because _____

_____

_____

This month we discussed _____

_____

_____

Before my next conference, I plan to work on _____

_____

Appendix Y

Second Grade Story Frame

STORY FRAME

This story takes place_____
_____ is an important character in the story who _____
_____

A problem occurs when _____
_____

After that, _____

↑
attempts to solve the problem

The problem is solved when _____
_____

↑
consequence of attempts

The story ends when _____

↑
resolution

Appendix Z

Third Grade S.O.S. Guide (Poster)

Who?

When?

Where?

Problem?

Solution?

Appendix AA

Spreadsheet of Kindergarten Missed Sight Words (January)

	0 words	1 words
Number of Students	20	2

Appendix BB

Spreadsheet of First Grade Missed Sight Words

	0 words	1 word	2 words	3 words	4 words	5 words
Number of Students	13	6	1	2	3	2

Appendix CC

Student Survey (January)

Reading Attitude Survey

Name _____

Directions: Ask the student the questions and give him/her time to think. Prompt the child to give more detailed answers. Ask the child to explain why.

What is reading? _____

How do you feel about reading? _____

How do you feel about yourself as a reader? _____

Why do you think it is important to be a good reader? _____

What was your favorite part of Reader's Workshop? _____

Why? _____

If you could change one thing about Reader's Workshop, what would you change? _____

Why? _____